

Waller, whose knowledge of the Zanzibar coast, and whose assistance to me in obtaining collections from that interesting province, prompt me to make this slight acknowledgement of his services.

XXXIII.—*Notes on the Avifauna of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands.* By E. L. LAYARD, C.M.G. &c.

A FRENCH gentleman, who is collecting specimens, sent us, a day or two back, a fine adult example of *Accipiter haplochrous* ♂. It had been forwarded to him from a distance, together with a couple of "Flying-Foxes;" and our weather being hot and thundery, their perfume may be imagined! My friend felt he *could not* finish the lot in time, so fortunately elected to keep the Bats and send us the bird! Another journey through the sun, in the hands of a canaque, did not improve matters; but as this species is very rare, and a male had only once before reached me, we set to work on it with a piece of rag saturated with carbolic acid pinned under our nose, and a solution of the same constantly applied to the specimen while being dissected!

Measurements, taken *in the flesh*, of both sexes of the bird, lead us to suppose that the specimen on which the species was founded by Mr. Selater (Ibis, 1859, p. 275, pl. viii.) may have been a male, and not a female, as labelled by Mr. John Macgillivray.

We subjoin the measurements of two of each sex, together with those given by Mr. Selater of his specimen:—

	Length.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarse.	Bill.	Colour of Eye.
	in. lin.	in. lin.	in. lin.	in. lin.	in. lin.	
Two ♀	15 0	9 6	7 6	2 10	1 0	Cadmium-yellow.
♂ No. 1 ..	13 0	9 0	6 6	2 3	10	Crimson.
♂ No. 2 ..	14 6	9 0	6 6	2 3	10	do.
Selater's						
supposed ♀	14.5	9.3	6.6	2.6		

It is curious that the colour of the eyes in these two males

should be crimson, while those of the females should be bright cadmium-yellow.

The bird last sent was killed while harrying a chicken ; but a previous specimen had fed on mice, the skins of which were found in pellets in its stomach.

We lately (November 15th), while in some forest at Ya-houé, came across the White-bellied Wood-Swift (*Collocalia uropygialis*, G. R. Gray) breeding in a small cavern in some rocks at the foot of a huge banian-tree. The nests, eleven in number, were placed almost all together in two rows, one partly over the other, like scales on a fish. They were composed almost entirely of green moss, without any lining, and stuck to the face of the sloping rock by the glutinous saliva of the bird. In shape they are flattened ovals ; greatest length inside 2 inches, depth about $2\frac{1}{2}$. The flat side, of course, was against the rock. In some were young birds, just hatched, and in others eggs in all stages of incubation, some being quite fresh. Eggs, two in each nest, pure white, elongated, and abruptly truncated at each end ; axis 8^m, diam. 5^m.

A gentleman, who has a slight knowledge of birds, while lately inspecting the collection brought by L. L. from Blanche Bay &c., pitched upon specimens of *Dendrochelidon mystaceus*, and informed us he had seen Swallows of that size, but without the elongated tail, in the north of this island, at Pacu. On questioning him, we have come to the conclusion that the birds seen, from their colour, shape, and size, must have been *Chatura caudacuta*, the large Australian Spiny-tailed Swift ; nor do we see why a bird of such enormous power of wing should not, in its migration, occasionally reach these shores.

The acquisition of a series of our new Blackbird (*Turdus mareensis*) from the island of Maré, one of the Loyalty group, enables us to describe the female of this interesting species.

One in breeding-plumage is nearly as black on the upper surface as the male ; but below, from the chin to the vent, each feather is sooty black, rather broadly bordered all round with brown, with a greenish tint. This, of course, gives it a

“scaled” appearance. The white vent is tinted with brown, more or less, and so also are the peculiar markings of the under tail-coverts. Some fine males also enable us to characterize these more particularly. Each feather has a white shaft, leading into a largish white tear-shaped spot, which occupies the entire point of the plume. These under tail-coverts and the white vent readily distinguish the species from any other of the genus we have from these parts.

In the collection containing these birds were specimens of our new *Erythrura cyaneifrons*, and also of *Aplonis atro-nitens*, G. R. Gray, showing that these two species extend from Lifu (whence first described) to, at least, one other island of the group.

On another expedition, a few days earlier, a fine example of the rare *Clytorhynchus pachycephaloides*, D. G. Elliot, was obtained in the locality where we previously found it. Unfortunately, “Long Tom” behaved badly, and “balled;” and when the native with us picked up our prize he exclaimed, “Head belong-a-him-fellow; he no stop!” We had smashed it to fragments, though a long shot through bushes; perhaps a “splinter” had done the mischief.

We should here remark that L. L. procured this obscure dusky-coloured bird during a short stay he made on Vate (Sandwich Island), New Hebrides, in May last.

Our French friend likewise confirmed a report that we (E. L. L.) heard at Houailou, that the Crows of the west coast were a far larger species than the little *Physocorax moneduloides*, Less., of the eastern coast. He says they do not come down within sixty or eighty miles of Noumea, but that where found they are not uncommon. He also feelingly confirmed the reports of the “body-snatching” propensities of the smaller birds, which he knew nothing of till he had eaten some fifteen or twenty! He was then informed by the natives that these birds always picked the bones of their dead, which were exposed on trees for the purpose. This was too much for even our friend’s love of “gibier,” Frenchman though he be, and *he has given up eating Crows!*

On what authority does Dr. Finsch conclude that a speci-

men of *Platycercus ulieteanus* (Gm.) in the British Museum is from Tanna, New Hebrides? (*cf.* Ibis, 1873, p. 30). In Gray's 'Birds of Tropical Islands,' the habitat of Tanna is marked with doubt (?). We have made many inquiries, but cannot learn that such a bird exists on the island, nor do we deem it at all likely that the Society Islands and Tanna should possess an identical species.

Again, *Trichoglossus pygmæus* is said to have come from Otaheite (*cf.* Ibis, 1873, p. 32); but Latham says "it inhabits several of the islands in the South Seas." The figure of this bird given in 'The Ibis' (*loc. cit.*) will do admirably for the female of *T. palmarum*, Forst., which L. L. lately procured on Vate, and believes he saw on Api and Santo (*cf.* Ibis, 1878, p. 274) on a previous visit. Without actual comparison of specimens we can do no more than express our belief in the identity of the species, and that Otaheite has been given as an erroneous habitat. The colours of the bill and legs given in the figure undoubtedly differ from those of our more recently killed birds; but that may be simply the effect of age and exposure. In our specimens even they are rapidly changing; but L. L.'s notes give them "coral-red;" iris "light orange," not brown, as in the plate. There is also the slightest tinge of crimson on the feathers at the base of the lower mandible; but these may be easily overlooked, and probably, from what we know of allied forms, do not exist in young females, or in males previous to their first moult.

We have been fortunate enough to secure a magnificent specimen of *Drepanoptila holosericea* (Temm.) with its gizzard undistended with food; and we can now confidently state that it is in perfect accord with the figure given by Prof. Garrod in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1874, p. 257, of the gizzard of *Ptilopus*, thus setting at rest the question of its affinity with that genus.